

Ahoy there, 2nd Squadron

BLACK HORSE

— Find the Bastards — Then Pile On —

Vol. 3, No. 5

BLACKHORSE

November 1970

"Hold your ears!"
This familiar warning from the 2nd Squadron Howitzer Battery came from the South China Sea in mid-October as the Hows briefly yielded part of their responsibilities to the Navy.

When G Troop began a mission along the coast line in Binh Thuan Province about 50 miles southwest of Xuan Loc, their organic artillery at Fire Support Base Bolan was too far away to be of any assistance.

It was then that the squadron got the idea of using the two, five-inch guns aboard the Naval destroyer escort U.S.S. Davidson, anchored only a half-mile off shore.

To make the arrangements, Lieutenant Colonel John L. Ballantyne III, the squadron commander, and Major Dennis V. Crumley, the operations officer, flew to the Davidson and were greeted by 300 sailors.

"It was like landing on a postage stamp," recalls Warrant Officer Thomas F. Temple, the pilot of the helicopter. He had been told that landing on the ship would be difficult, but "I didn't notice it until after we sat down and were strapped to the deck. Everything started rolling back and forth."

Before the chopper could land, the crew on the deck had prepared catch nets and donned asbestos suits in case of fire.

After the Huey had landed, the ship's crew was eager to trade their U.S.S. Davidson cigarette lighters for Blackhorse lighters, the helicopter crewmen said.

"They went to a lot of trouble for the landing and were more than willing to give us the fire support," said Major Crumley.

Marine Sergeant Jay M. Bernstein, a member of a Naval Gun Fire Spot Team, was brought to Fire Support Base Bolan as a liaison NCO to maintain communications with the Davidson.

In a week's time, the two, five-inch guns shot more than ten missions into the jungle which the G Troopers were busting through.

Action highlight

Troopers' fast response repels VC

The quick response of 3rd Squadron's K Troop during an enemy attack against a Popular Forces compound Sept. 26 and A Troop's interception of a late-night VC patrol were the highlights of the 11th ACR activity during the 30-day period ending Oct. 25.

Responding to a call for help from the Popular Forces compound at Tan Binh, K troopers and the popular forces soldiers killed 14 enemy in repelling the assault. An Air Cav Troop white team killed two more VC the next day while searching enemy escape routes.

The second platoon of 1st Squadron's A Troop was set up at strong points on the highway east of Bien Hoa Oct. 2 when Platoon Sergeant Ramon Vega spotted a patrol of 12 to 15 VC. At least four of the enemy soldiers were killed when the platoon opened fire on them.

Throughout the month of October, 1st Squadron continued its efforts to provide hamlet and road security in Long Khanh Province, thereby freeing the local regional forces to launch offensive operations against the VC entrenched in the jungle.

In addition, B Troop worked with the 318th Land Clearing Company on a Rome Plow operation during the latter part of the month.

The squadron placed increased emphasis on refresher training during October. Each of



Infantrymen from the 1st Cav receive a little extra protection from 2nd Squadron's tracks during a joint operation.

The line troops went through a combat crew proficiency course at the Trang Bom tank firing range, a facility of the RVN Armed Forces Armor School.

And on Oct. 21, the squadron provided a nine hour block of instruction on armored tactics at the school. The classes were given to officers of Vietnamese armor units.

The bandits of the 11th ACR's 3rd Squadron also

provided hamlet and road security, helping Regional Forces units mount offensive operations in Binh Duong Province.

A number of enemy caches were discovered in bunker complexes by the squadron during its reconnaissance patrolling.

In addition to its normal duties, the second platoon of the 919th Engineers helped build compounds for the Regional Forces in the area.

Second Squadron, still under the operational control of the 3rd Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, continued working in Binh Tuy and Binh Thuan Provinces in an area of operations 100 miles east of Di An.

On Sept. 20, F Troop began securing Rome Plows from the 60th Land Clearing Company and spent the entire month with the operation.

E and G Troops were busy in the western portion of the AO, with Evil Troopers killing four VC in ambushes and dismounted patrols.

The two troops also provided

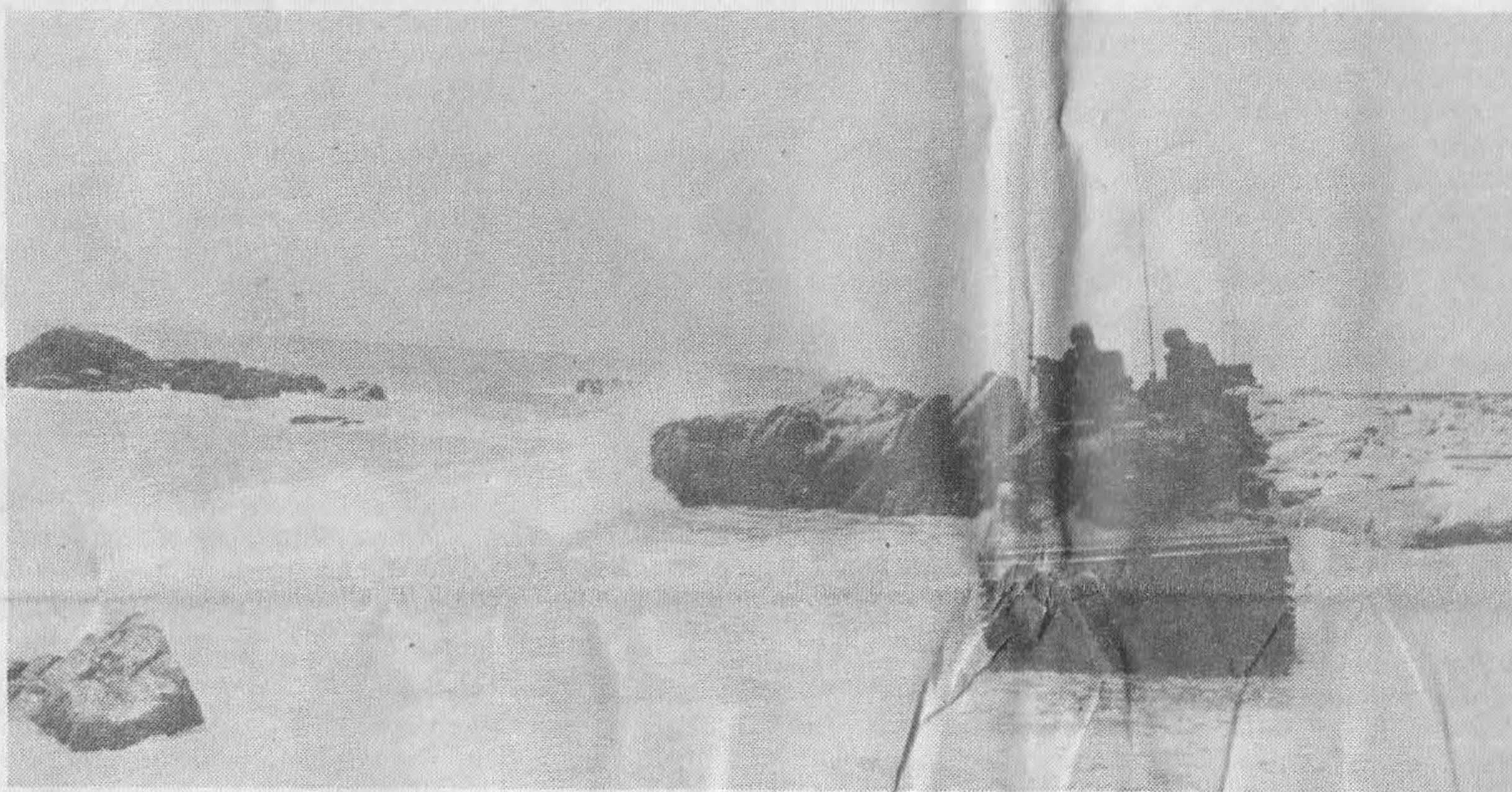
security for psychological operations teams and helped the Vietnamese National Police secure roads during population and resource control projects.

G Troop worked with two 1st Cav units, D and C Companies of the 2nd of the 8th Cavalry. Together they reconned through an area close to the South China Sea, at times actually patrolling the beach. They uncovered a number of mines from the sandy shore.

On Oct. 17, E and G Troops began an operation to the west of Ham Tan village with two Regional forces Companies.

Meanwhile, the H Company tankers set up mobile check points near Fire Support Base Bolan to control local traffic.

Fire support for the squadron came from four different support bases and one Navy ship during the month. While three guns stayed at Fire Support Base Bolan from the Howitzer Battery, the others were moved between three small fire bases, Donna, Jo Ann, and Marla. In addition, the squadron used the two five-inch guns on the Naval destroyer escort, the U.S.S. Davidson.



Sheridan-turned-beach buggy -- G Troop track cruises along the beach during an operation in Binh Thuan Province.

Letters to teacher's pet

This month, a trooper in the 11th ACR received a packet of letters written to him by his wife's fifth grade students.

The letters all had in common a sense of awe for a soldier who was actually in Vietnam along with a certain confusion over the correct spelling of "multiplication".

Some excerpts:

I hope you are fine I' am fine to so I here are in the army.

Do you run an army tank. How many guns do you have for all the men. How is it sleeping out in the wilderness.

Is it hot or cold or warm over there?

Your wife is a good teacher, except for today when she's making us write these letters.

I have to go now because school is over.

Thanksgiving message

As we approach Thanksgiving Day we are mindful of the true meaning of the thanks we offer to our maker on that day. We gain greater understanding and appreciation of those blessings as we share sacrifices for freedom of the people of Vietnam. Our forefathers set this day aside to commemorate their successful harvest with the hope that their good fortune would continue. I hope you will share with me a silent prayer of thanks for the blessings our forefathers struggled so long to provide for us. I wish you the best and trust the friendship and camaraderie which are found in the Blackhorse Regiment will serve to help fulfill for you the true meaning of Thanksgiving.

John L. Gerrity
Colonel, Armor
Commanding

Commander's message

Welcome troopers

This month I want to welcome a special brand of new Blackhorse Trooper and to reemphasize our need to concentrate on the practice of fundamentals.

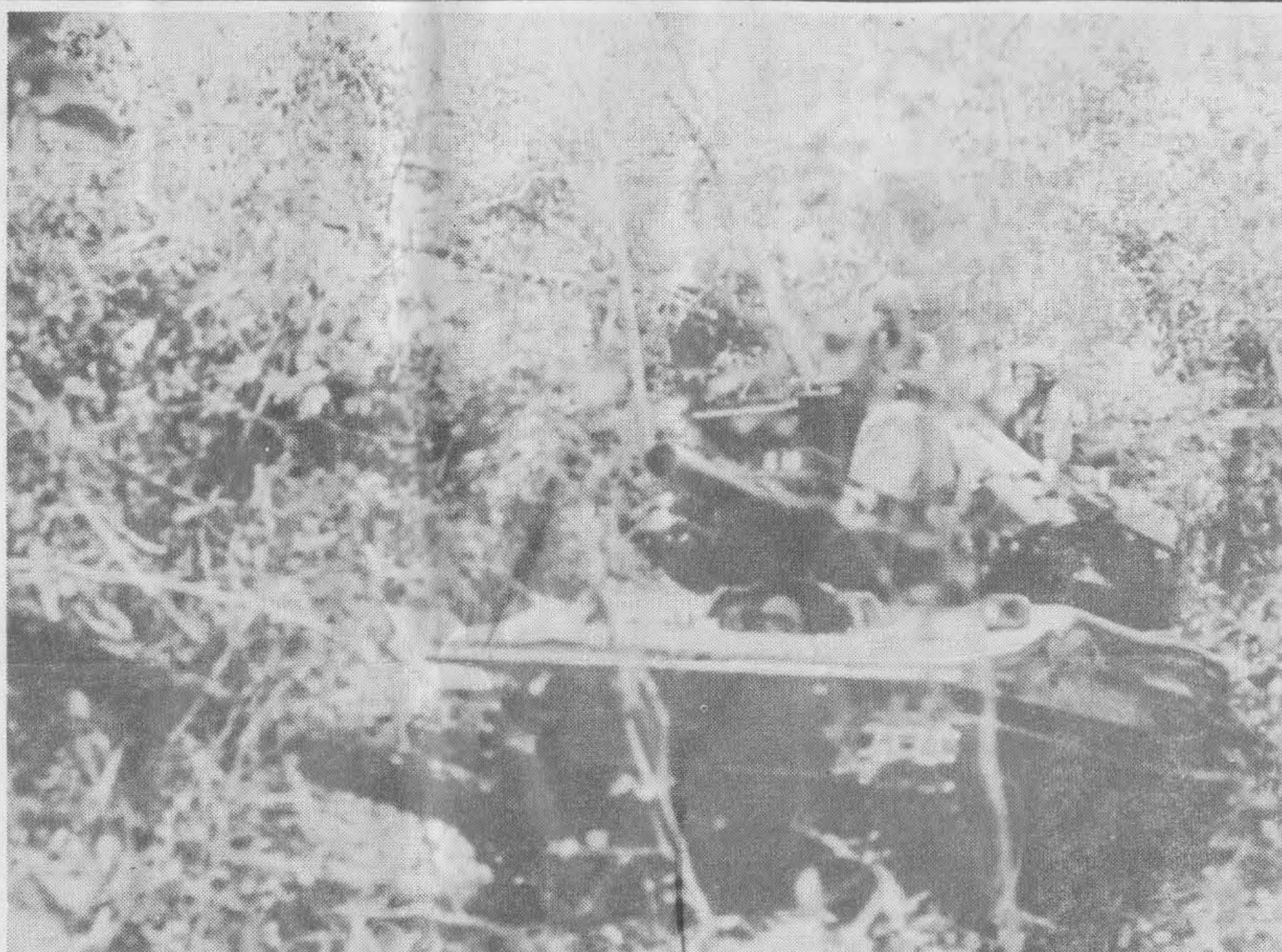
First, I welcome to the Regiment those men who were assigned from units leaving Vietnam under President Nixon's Vietnamization program. Each of you has come from a fine Army unit to the best Armored Cavalry Regiment in the world. I am confident that you will find your new assignment challenging and satisfying. You have my best wishes.



In the future, we can expect that our ranks will be filled increasingly by men reassigned from redeploying units. Because those men will have already completed portions of their tours, turnover will be more frequent. Such rapid turnover makes it ever more essential that we keep our eyes on the ball, remembering that the key fundamentals for our Regiment are found in those things which give us the ability to *move, shoot, and communicate.*

Allons,

John L. Gerrity
Colonel, Armor
Commanding



TIMBER -- A Blackhorse Sheridan bowls over a tree while on a patrol.

Blackhorse brings security to Trang Bom

"Security is good when the 11th ACR stays here. I'm very happy with the last few months. We killed five VC and wounded five others. A VC unit headquarters was found on a joint operation. The local inhabitants think Trang Bom is much more secure with the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment here."

The speaker was Captain Pham Van Tuyen, the commander of the Regional Forces around the hamlet of Trang Bom in Duc Tu District of Bien Hoa Province. His job of providing village and hamlet security for the area has been made a lot easier by the arrival of Blackhorse units in the area this summer.

Working together, the Regional Forces units and the 11th ACR's 1st Squadron cut the VC activity to only a

fraction of what it once was and changed Trang Bom's rating from a Class D to a Class C hamlet.

Explaining the joint operations, First Lieutenant Robert C. Graves, the assistant leader of the MACV advisory team assigned to the Regional Forces, explained; "The 11th Cav usually acts as the blocking force while the Vietnamese forces sweep the enemy toward the armor vehicles. The Air Cavalry Troop and the Squadron helicopters are a great help, and the Rome Plows the 11th ACR uses make the jungle a lot more accessible to the RF's."

One of the most significant operations which aided in securing the hamlet occurred in August. Lt. Graves recalls, "On August 7, we had a combined operation

with the 11th ACR and found a VC basecamp. We made contact at ten in the morning and got four kills. The next morning we went out and found the district VC headquarters. The Cav came in and Rome Plowed it under."

The mobility of the 11th ACR has also enabled the Trang Bom Regional Forces to monitor traffic in the area more effectively. In the month of September alone, 26 people, including one VC suspect, several illegal residents and draft dodgers, were detained.

"Every unauthorized person that we can keep out of the area makes Trang Bom that much more secure," Lt. Graves states.

We have a great deal to be thankful for

by Chaplain (LTC)
Peter J. Hoffman

THANKSGIVING DAY in the American tradition is a day of family celebration and festivity. It reminds us of our national and personal blessings, but more than this, it demonstrates the central importance of family life in the United States. Thanksgiving away from home can, at best, be carried out ceremoniously and with a kind of forced gaiety for those who have previously enjoyed it as a family gathering. Even after having considered all of this, we of the Blackhorse still have much to be thankful for, right here in Vietnam.

As we eat the traditional menu of turkey, cranberry sauce, and pumpkin pie we have a remarkable opportunity for reflection on the past and our present lot in life. Let me presume to suggest some things that are worthy of

consideration, with respect to thankfulness. First of all we should be grateful for an economic system in America which has rewarded honest labor in an ever increasing way. In the last twenty years the number of families which have real incomes of less than \$5,000 in terms of the dollar's value in 1966 has dropped from 60% to less than 25%. We enjoy a national average income of more than \$8,000 a year. Compare this with the present average income in the rest of the world of \$450 a year. This system works for us even when we are far from home. We must admit that even in Vietnam the greatest hardships that Americans experience are not personal discomfort or material want, but rather things like the threat of danger, loneliness and separation from our families.

We should also be grateful for our physical endowments. Life itself is a blessing. Some of the

most grateful people I've ever known have been patients in our evacuation hospitals. Even though they were horribly wounded and maimed they were still alive and rejoicing about this one fact. We sometimes take our sight or other faculties for granted. Reflect a moment on the joy we experience in life because of our senses like that of sight. If a pretty girl is like a melody, then some tropical sunsets are like symphonic rhapsodies, and both are a blessing because we can see. Physical blessings are reason for gratitude.

We should, further, be grateful for our families and

friends. Our intimate relationships with others provide one of the greatest sources of happiness that we can know. Loving parents have made us self-sufficient by their love but more than this they have taught us to be loving toward our fellow man. Some of us have committed ourselves in love to good women who have returned our love, and worked with us to establish families which are further sources of happiness. The rest of us look forward to that day when we will find the right young lady, will marry, and will claim this promise of happiness. Beyond the family and the hope of familial

happiness, each of us has the privilege of entering into close friendships which are rewarding. Most of us will long treasure memories of associations in this Regiment forged in these days of conflict. Friends and family and that wider circle of congenial associates with whom we live our lives both in the military and home communities are, then, sources of happiness and reason for gratitude.

Let us be thankful to God for providence of the good life through material blessing, physical life, human relations, and for the hope of ever better things to come in these areas.

The wedding celebration

by Sergeant First Class
Doan Khai

Hi my friends,

This month I want to give you a better understanding of some more customs of the Vietnamese, in particular the wedding celebration.

Usually, on the day before the wedding, the bride and groom must have their horoscopes read. The horoscopes are especially important for the wedding and numerous checks are made prior to the ceremony. As an example of the importance of the horoscope, a person born during the year of the tiger might not be able to marry a person born during the year of the monkey.

Once the ages have been checked, with the horoscopes saying everything is well, the wedding celebration is begun. The boy's family then has a banquet. Among the poor, it may be a tea party or nothing at all, but for the well to do it may be a big party.

On the wedding day, the family of the bridegroom goes with the groom at a specially chosen hour to the bride's home. They all walk, or ride by boat or car with garlands of flowers, to gather in a procession. This procession is normally led by an old man in dark clothes who is carrying an incense burner.

The groom's parents and older relatives follow the elderly man. Women along the side of the street carry betel leaves and areca nuts and offer them to the wedding party. When the procession reaches the bride's home, they are welcomed and invited in by the girl's parents.

A banquet is often held at this point. Near the end of the banquet, the groom's family traditionally acts as though they are very anxious to take the bride to their home. The groom's entourage begins the trip home in a procession with the bride and her attendants, friends, and relatives joining.

Upon arrival at the groom's house, the party is met by the loud noise of firecrackers, although rifles are sometimes used today. The guests are invited inside with the bride and groom, and another ceremony, which honors the Genie of Marriage, soon commences.

The Genie of Marriage is called the Rose Silk Thread God and is believed to be responsible for the couple getting married. An altar is set up and lighted with candles, then incense and joss sticks are burned in honor of the Genie.

After this, the couple and their parents go around to thank the guests and receive speeches and gifts from them and in general engage in merrymaking.



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Varljen takes Bandit's reins

Lieutenant Colonel Frank E. Varljen took command of the Blackhorse Regiment's 3rd Squadron at a ceremony at Fire Support Base Bandit II Sept. 11.

He succeeds Lieutenant Colonel Bobby F. Griffin, the squadron commander since March.

The new Bandit commander entered the Army in 1950 and was commissioned in 1952 following graduation from Armor OCS.

Since then his assignments have included three years with the 4th Armored Division in Germany, two years with the 2nd Squadron of the 8th Armored Cavalry Regiment at Ft. Lewis, and three years with the 3rd Squadron of the 8th Cavalry in Germany.

His last assignment, before coming to the Blackhorse, was as



a squadron commander with the 4th Armored Cavalry, 4th Armored Division, in Germany.

He was Regimental S-3, or operations officer, for six weeks before taking the reins of the Workhorse.

Lt. Col. Varljen, noting the fine record of the bandits, told his men: "I'm sure that in the future we will continue to maintain that record."

In his speech to the men of 3rd Squadron, Lt. Col. Griffin thanked them for the cooperation and courage which they displayed while he was their commander and asked them to do as well for Lt. Col. Varljen.

During the change of command ceremony, Lt. Col. Griffin was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Bronze Star Medal, the Air Medal, and the Purple Heart.

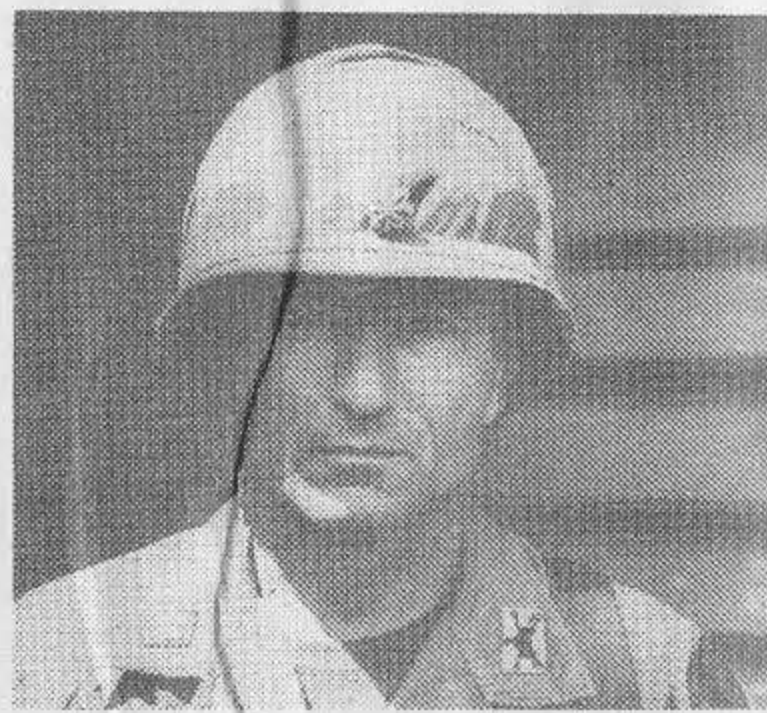
Commenting on his impressions after serving as squadron commander for six and one-half months, Lt. Col. Griffin said, "Anything you do after commanding the bandits is anti-climactic. It was a great privilege to work with a group of people like this. They're quite a team and a great bunch of guys."

Crow new operations officer

Major John S. Crow has moved up to the Regimental S-3 position after serving with the Blackhorse since June as deputy installation coordinator and assistant S-3, operations, consecutively.

A Distinguished Military Graduate of the Army ROTC program at Northwestern State College, Louisiana, Major Crow is now on his second tour in Vietnam. In 1965-66 he served as a subsector advisor in the IV Corps area and was also an operations advisor to the 9th ARVN Division.

Following his commissioning in 1959, Crow served as a platoon leader and troop executive officer with the 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment at Ft. Meade, Md. until 1961. From there he went to the 3rd



Armored Division in Germany, where he commanded a tank company.

In 1965, following graduation from the Armor Officer Career Course at Ft. Knox, he came to Vietnam on his first tour. When he returned from Vietnam he taught in the ROTC program at Northeast Louisiana University.

From there, as part of a special exchange program, he went to Germany and the 11th Hussars (Prince Albert's Own) of the British Army of Rhine. There, from 1967 to 1969, he commanded a tank squadron in the Regiment which tested Britain's new main battle tank, the Chieftain.

Following this tour, he went to the Command and General Staff College at Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas, and then to the 11th ACR in Vietnam.

Among his awards are the Bronze Star Medal, the Air Medal, the Army Commendation Medal, the Purple Heart and the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry.

Major Crow, who is on the Army's lieutenant colonel list, is married and the father of two daughters.

Doctors: we're ready to help

"We are available for help. Any of the doctors in the Regiment would be more than happy to talk with anyone about the problem," says Major Howard A. Kronenberg of the 37th Medical Company.

For the past two months, Dr. Kronenberg has been active in the Regiment's two-pronged attack against drug abuse. He has been treating drug users as part of the drug amnesty program, which is designed to rehabilitate addicts, and he has been participating in the education program to alert others to the dangers of hard narcotics.

The drug amnesty program was developed after the doctors in the 11th Cav realized that some of the people they were coming into contact with were becoming addicted. "I started talking with other doctors and flight surgeons and I realized that this was increasing all over the area and not just in the 11th ACR," Dr. Kronenberg said.

After discussing the problem with various experts, the doctors came to the conclusion that the problem of drug abuse could best be handled at the unit level.

The amnesty program offers immunity from disciplinary action to any user of drugs who turns himself in for help in overcoming his drug problems. The emphasis is on rehabilitation, with everything being done to help an individual get off drugs and stay off.

The first step is to get the drug user off the habit. Those turning themselves in are sent to the 37th Med to see a doctor and a psychologist. The two will decide whether the patient needs to be treated as an in or out patient.

"If we believe the patient will have a difficult withdrawal period, we will admit him to the 37th Med," Dr. Kronenberg says. During the withdrawal period, which usually lasts four days, a person experiences a runny nose, watery eyes, headaches, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, cramps and severe muscle aches, and anxiety.

"These effects are treated symptomatically," Dr. Kronenberg explains. "We give diarrhea medication, analgesics for pain, and tranquilizers for anxiety."

After a successful withdrawal, patients often regularly return to see a psychologist and to participate in group therapy or discussion periods with former drug users.

Discussing the process of rehabilitation, Dr. Kronenberg stressed that people trying to solve their drug problems need the tolerance and understanding of everyone — doctor, psychologist, social worker, section leader, commander, and colleagues — to help overcome their problem.

Again, it is stressed that successful treatment can only be achieved through the individual's motivation with the medical team acting only in a supportive role.

The counselling sessions former drug users have with psychologists are a prime source of information used in the education program. Each week a team, consisting of a doctor, a social worker, and a former drug user, visits the Cavalry Training School.

"The emphasis is first to classify drugs and to let the troops know which are addicting and which are not," Dr. Kronenberg says.

The major part of each session is devoted to hard drugs, specifically heroin, amphetamines and barbiturates. The dangers and consequences of the use of hard drugs are discussed, and the former addict tells about his experiences, how he started using drugs, the problems he had while taking drugs, and the ordeal of withdrawal.

The doctor explains the properties of physical dependence and tolerance, or the need to increase the dosage of a hard drug in order to get the same response or feeling.

Dr. Kronenberg believes that the problem of drug abuse has increased in recent months for three reasons: hard drugs are more readily available in the Di An area; it is too easy to get caught smoking marijuana and much easier to hide ampules of heroin or amphetamines and binocet tablets; and the false belief that people are using cocaine and the belief that cocaine is non-addictive. There is actually very little cocaine available, most of what is sold as cocaine is actually heroin.

Although he sees some initial success since the drug abuse program has started, Dr. Kronenberg feels that now is not the time to relax efforts because hard drugs will probably continue to be available in the area and new people will be tempted to experiment with them and inadvertently become addicted.

Honored for Valor

SILVER STAR

Captains John Eberle, C Troop; Arthur L. West III, C Troop. Staff Sergeant Elwood Brown, L Troop. Specialist 4 Jerrild L. Vesey, 37th Med (Posthumous).

DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS

Lieutenant Colonel Grail L. Brookshire, 2nd Squadron Headquarters.

Captain Joe B. Jenkinson, Air Car Troop. First Lieutenants Dan L.F. Coombs, Air Cav Troop; Charles S. Rousek, Air Cav Troop.

Warrant Officers Billy L. Hunziker, 2nd Squadron Headquarters; George M. Madison, Air Cav Troop; James P. Owens, 3rd Squadron Headquarters; Richard L. Paris, 1st Squadron Headquarters.

SOLDIER'S MEDAL

First Sergeant Vernon E. Nevil, M Company; Evans Washington, C Troop.

Platoon Sergeant George A. Hutchins, K Troop. Staff Sergeant Floyd J. Brooks, C Troop. Sergeants Robert D. Duncan, C Troop; Tony E. Parks, C Troop. Specialists 5 Kevin C. Overfield, C Troop; Steve W. Storie, Air Cav Troop.

Specialist 4 Val R. Cramey, K Troop; Michael Leonard, M Company; Raymond W. Miller, K Troop; Larry Snyder, 3rd Squadron Headquarters.

Privates First Class Willie G. Ford, 3rd Squadron Headquarters; James Shipma, M Company.

BRONZE STAR

Major William K. Harris, 3rd Squadron Headquarters. Captain Arthur L. West, C Troop. First Lieutenants Thomas A. Peck, C Troop; Thomas H. Reese, Jr., 3rd Squadron Headquarters; Horace P. Smith III, C Troop; Phillip J. Sorota, C Troop.

First Sergeant Evans Washington, C Troop. Staff Sergeants Willie J. Berry, M Company; James W. Craig, F Troop; Jesse T. Crowe, C Troop; Eugene P. Davis, M Company; Donald E. Drew, C Troop; Randolph A. Henderson, F Troop; Leonard J. Thibodeaux, L Troop; Michael B. Watkins, M Company.

Sergeant Percy Bly, L Troop; Robert D. Duncan, C Troop. Specialists 5 Benjamin J. Feary, Air Cav Troop; Walter R. Gensemer, C Troop; Daniel T. Hayes, 2nd Squadron Headquarters; James J. Percundi, Air Cav Troop.

Specialists 4 Bruce E. Bach, L Troop; John J. Barry, 37th Med; Val R. Cramey, K Troop; Johnnie Kramer, L Troop; Donald C. Moody, C Troop; Robert R. Mueller, M Company; Michael C. Otoman, G Troop; Michael A. Pitt, L Troop; John D. Rogers, L Troop; Albert M. Savianeso, L Troop; William S. Speliazza, L Troop; Roy T. Starcher, B Troop; Howard J. Tuttle, B Troop; Richard S. Wallich, D Company.

AIR MEDAL

First Lieutenant Joe E. Clemons, Air Cav Troop. Warrant Officers Jeffrey R. Garner, Air Cav Troop; Billy L. Hunziker, 2nd Squadron Headquarters; Dean A. Pote, Air Cav Troop; Michael C. Wyman, 2nd Squadron Headquarters.

Specialist 5 Richard A. Tackzaia, 2nd Squadron Headquarters. Specialists 4 Donald H. Ayscue, 2nd Squadron Headquarters; Fred Deherra, Air Cav Troop; William L. Pennington, 3rd Squadron Headquarters.

ARMY COMMENDATION MEDAL

Majors James L. Abrahamson, 1st Squadron Headquarters; Frederick M. Franks, 2nd Squadron Headquarters.

Warrant Officer Alfred E. Santoro III, Regimental Headquarters. Sergeant First Class Herbert Walton, H Company. Staff Sergeant Charles J. Tyner, M Company.

Sergeants Percy E. Bly, Jr., L Troop; Luther G. Gee, L Troop; Daniel L. Thompson, L Troop; James D. Argo, C Troop; Billy W. Cornish, C Troop; Noah R. Daves, C Troop; Raymond L. Hopper, C Troop; Richard P. Lowe, L Troop; Jack Marchant, 3rd Squadron Headquarters.

Specialist 5 Dan L. Knowles, Air Cav Troop. Specialists 4 David Padilla, Regimental Headquarters; Michael R. Qualls, H Company; Wade Mincy, G Troop; John Rzakiewicz, C Troop; James M. Voyles, B Troop; Joseph Weston, L Troop; Melvin L. Willsey, L Troop.

Privates First Class John D. Browning, B Troop; Patrick J. Duffy, B Troop; Wayne Little, C Troop; Martin J. McManus, B Troop; James D. Claywell, 2nd Squadron How Battery; Albert Roscoe, Jr., 2nd Squadron How Battery; Dan D. Walker, 2nd Squadron Headquarters; Randall J. Waller, M Company.

Cutting the enemy off



Story and photos by Darrel Jensen

A giant construction project? No — a Rome Plow operation with F Troop ACAVs and Sheridans providing protection against an enemy attack.

The month-long operation began in late September when the F Troop cavalymen escorted the 34 D7E model plows of the 60th Land Clearing Company to a portion of the 2nd Squadron area of operations where villages look like ghost towns and roads had turned into foot paths.

"They are clearing the road of likely ambush sights and at the same time repairing places in the road so the local Vietnamese will be able to move back into the area," First Lieutenant James A. McKibbin of F Troop explained.

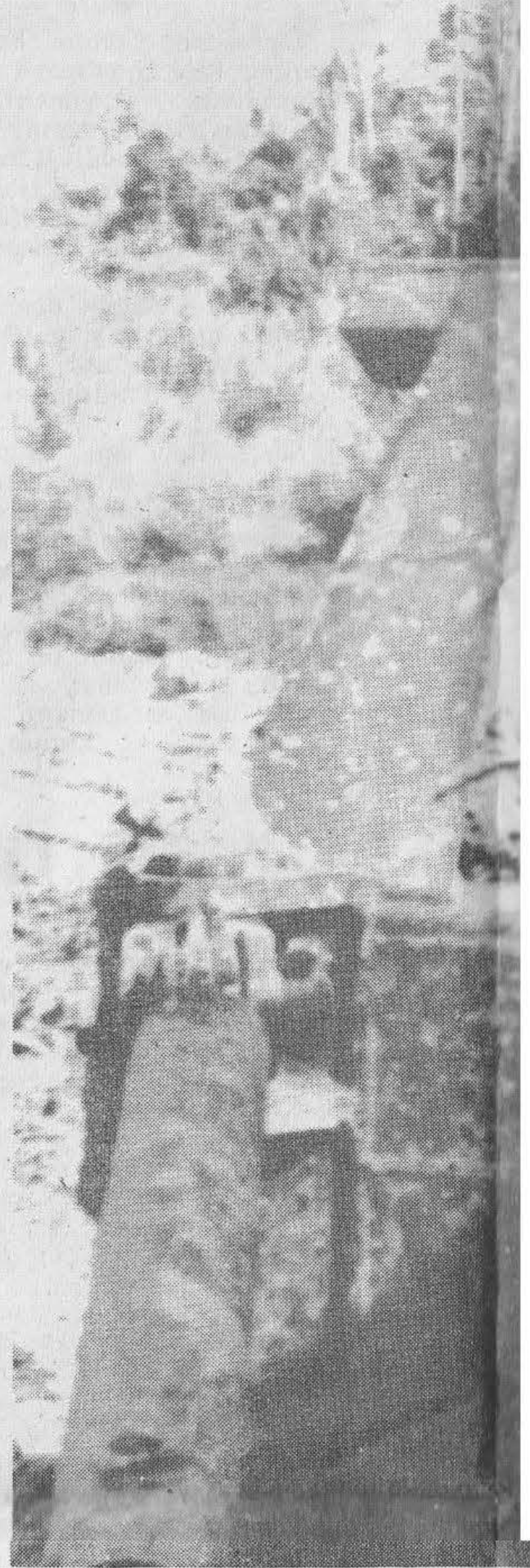
Even in heavy rains, two F Troop platoons each day

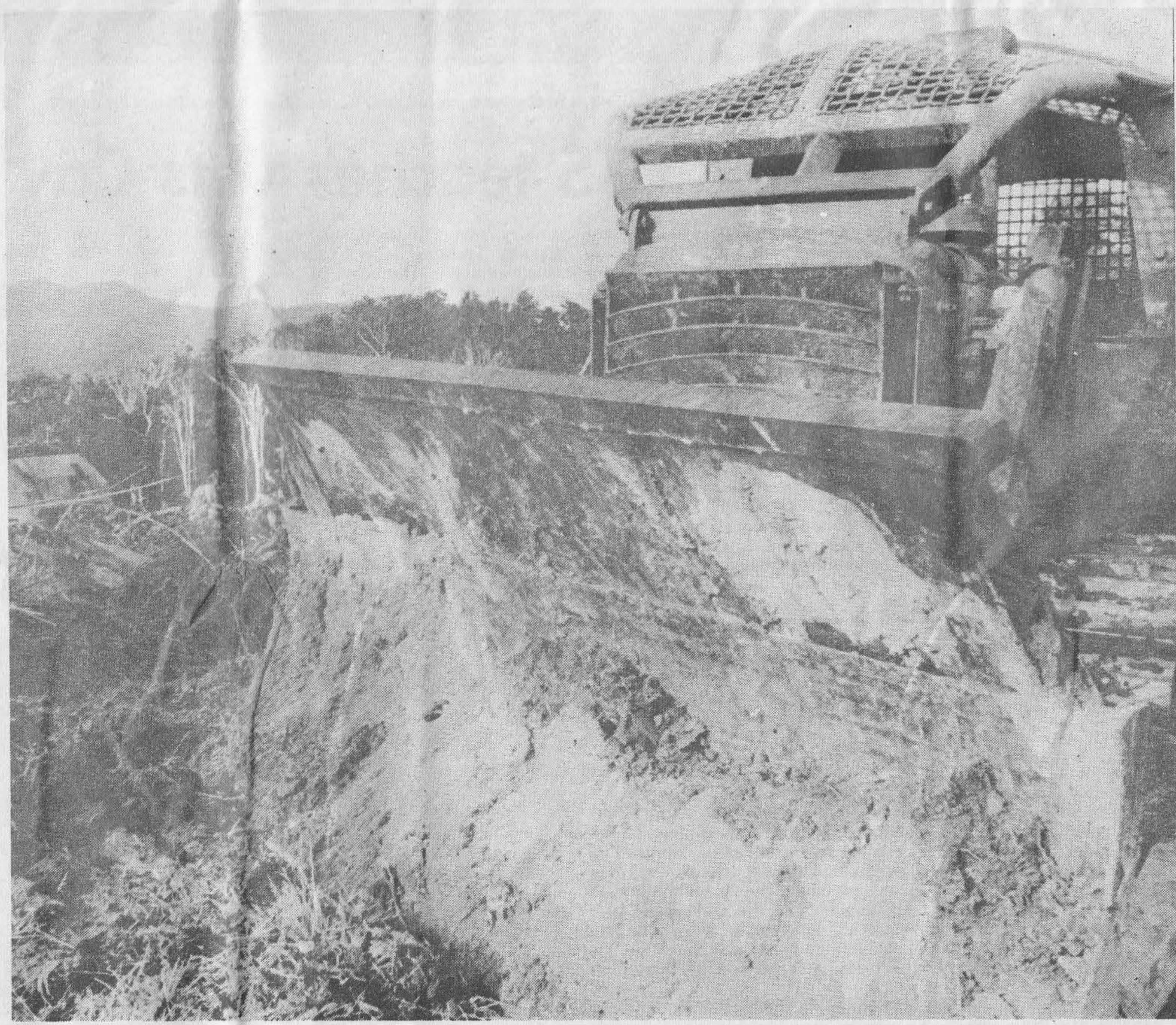
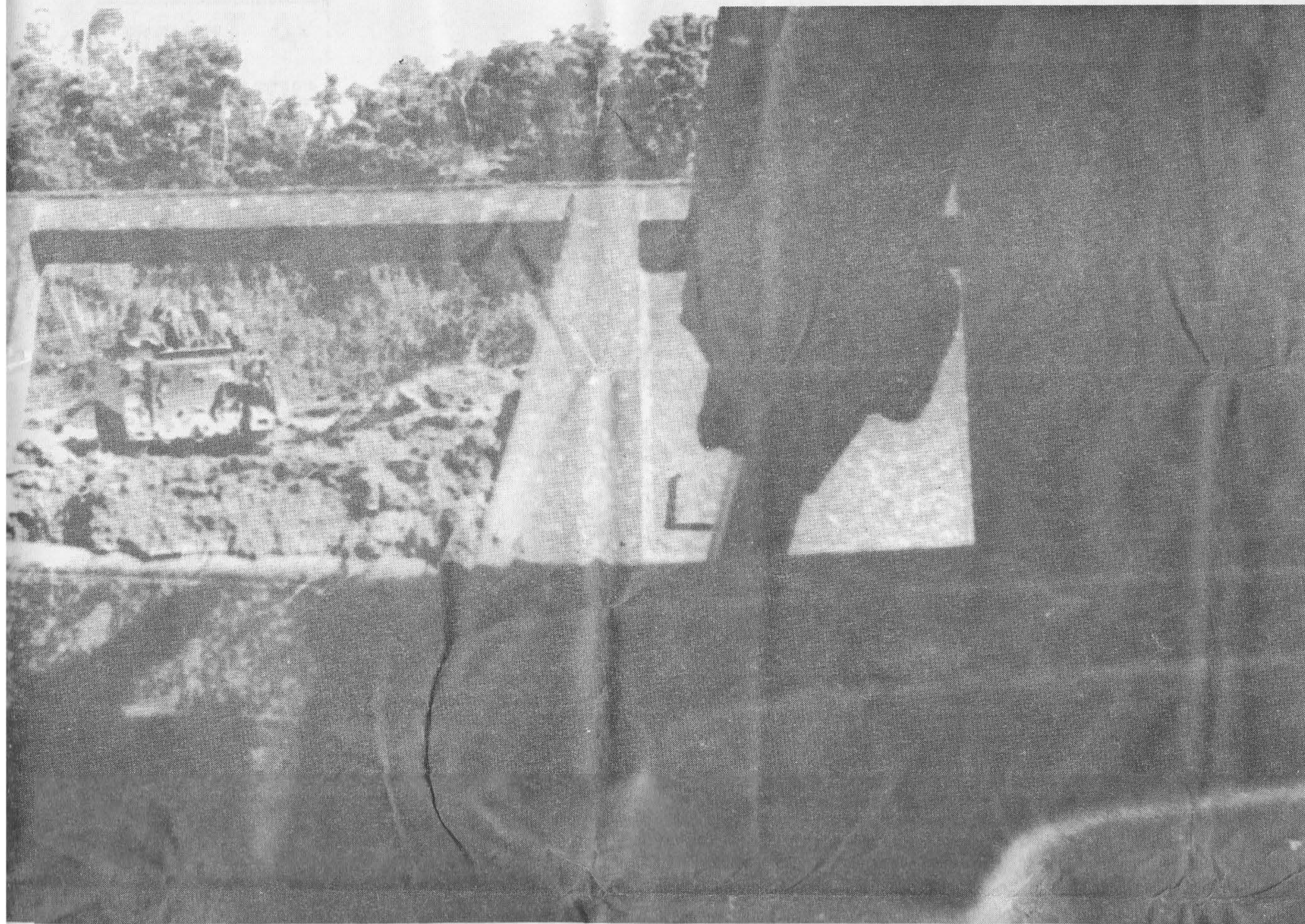
followed the flanked line of Rome Plows with their razor-sharp blades hacking through the dense jungle.

Occasionally one of the huge machines breaks down, and when that happens one of the F Troop tracks stops for security while the plow is repaired.

At the end of the day, the roles of protector and protected are reversed as the big jungle eaters cut through the brush around the Troop NDP, pushing back any possible sites for the enemy to attack from.

Similar operations in the area before met stiff enemy resistance. But any nemy forces choosing to remain in the area have stayed clear of the Blackhorse armor, leaving the Rome Plows to do their work unmolested.





K Troop helps PFs turn back VC

By Darrel Jensen

Teaming up with Popular Forces soldiers, Blackhorse troopers helped turn back a daring assault by the NVA/VC against the PF compound at Tan Binh, Sept. 26. Fourteen enemy soldiers were killed during the attack and two more were killed the next day as Light Observation Helicopters from the Air Cav Troop searched for escape routes.

"I was up listening to the radio when it started," said Captain Steven W. Ader, the commander of 3rd Squadron's K Troop, recalling the late-night attack. "When they called and said they were taking small arms fire, I deployed a platoon to help them out."

When K Troop's first platoon arrived at Tan Binh a few minutes later, the enemy ground probe of 50 to 60 soldiers was in full swing.

As Capt. Ader was leaving the troop NDP with the third platoon to be used as

a back-up force, First Lieutenant John Caswell, the first platoon leader, radioed back and said that a number of enemy soldiers had broken through the wire at the camp.

He described a scene of PFs shooting VC off the top of bunkers. One enemy soldier crawled into a bunker with a PF. The PF jumped out and threw a grenade back into the bunker, killing the VC.

The first platoon Sheridans fired their high explosive rounds from their main guns into the rubber south of the PF camp, from which the enemy had attacked.

When Capt. Ader and the third platoon arrived, everything had quieted down. The troop commander dismounted and went in through front gate. "When I walked in, I saw five enemy on the ground," he said. "There were ten wounded PF soldiers who the third platoon medic went over to treat."

The popular forces soldiers accounted

for 11 enemy dead and the K Troopers for another three.

The next morning, as an Air Cav Troop white team, consisting of two LOHs, was searching for possible enemy escape routes, a VC was spotted in a bunker. They shot him and were hovering over the area, getting ready to drop a smoke marker, when an observer, Specialist 5 Daniel A. Kavouras, noticed another VC behind a tree.

"The next thing I knew, there was a big white streak," remembers Kavouras. The white streak was an RPG, heading straight for Kavouras, who threw his hand up in front of his face. The RPG hit the hand, pushing it into his face, but bounced off without detonating. Despite a deep cut in his face, Kavouras was able to shoot the VC.

"I guess I was pretty lucky," the observer said. "I came out of it with just 13 stitches in my nose and a hell of a black eye."

A Troop ambushes patrol

By Ed Yokum

The darkness of night is no longer cover for the VC. An enemy patrol which attempted to sneak across Highway 1 on the night of Oct. 2 only to run into a bevy of Blackhorse troopers will emphatically agree.

The second platoon of A Troop had set up strong points on the highway to the east of Bien Hoa in order to prevent enemy movement along the highway. At one of the strong points, Platoon Sergeant Ramon Vega was observing the area around his position with a starlight scope.

At about ten o'clock, Sgt. Vega observed some movement. He spotted 12 to 15 enemy soldiers walking into the area. As he watched through the starlight scope, he alerted his crew to get ready to fire.

Apparently the VC saw some sign of trouble, because they dropped to the ground. In a short time, however, one of the group stood up again and motioned to the others to retreat back down the trail.

Seeing that the enemy was starting to run, Sgt. Vega gave the order to fire. Vega's Sheridan and a nearby ACAV commanded by Specialist 4 James L. Hale opened up with small arms, M60 machine guns, .50 caliber machine guns, and grenade launchers.

After the initial burst of firepower, Sgt. Vega fired several cannister rounds into the enemy position with the Sheridan's main gun, completely saturating the area.

The next morning the platoon searched the area and found the bodies of four enemy soldiers.

G Troop, infantry hunt VC

If you were to climb aboard a G Troop track during October, you might think that the 11th ACR had turned into a mechanized infantry unit for all the ruck sacks that were stacked to the top of the cargo hatches.

Well, the Blackhorse has not turned infantry, but the G Troopers have been having joint operations with infantry companies from the 1st Cav.

Captain Paul G. Knox, commander of Charlie Company, 8th Cavalry, explained it as a "hammer and anvil operation."

The day's work starts when the ACAVs carry the infantrymen out to the starting point of their sweep. The tracks then go to a predetermined spot where they set up to get a ride. And there is plenty of water and sodas on the tracks, and the guys are in the direction of G Troop, hoping to trap any enemy between the hammer and the anvil.

At the end of a day's operations, the two units join up again for the ride back to the NDP. "After a day of humping," Capt. Knox says, "it feels mighty good to get a ride. And there is plenty of water and sodas on the tracks and the guys are real good about giving a few away."

By the time the operation had ended, four VC had been killed as a result of the Blackhorse-Sky Troopers effort.



With the South China Sea in the background, a G Troop Sheridan heads out on patrol.

Pierce CTS teaches vets Cav's way

Although Pierce Cavalry Training School is known as "Newby School" to most Blackhorse troopers, it has lately been taking students who are by no means newbies.

Men who served with the 2nd Squadron of the 1st Cavalry, the 3rd Brigade, 9th Infantry Division, and the 199th Light Infantry Brigade are being assigned to the Blackhorse as troop reductions continue and units return to the States.

Although these "grunts" are seasoned troopers familiar with Vietnam and the enemy, most of them have had little or no experience with an armored

cavalry unit. It's the job of the Cavalry Training School to help them adjust to the ways of the Blackhorse.

"We don't teach them the full course," explains Sergeant First Class Charles M. Matulevich, the NCOIC at the school. "Instead, we give them an accelerated

course in two days. We teach them about the Sheridan, ACAVs, the weapons we use, mounted operations, and we answer any questions they may have."

Sgt. Matulevich estimates that the school has been averaging 25

in-country transfers a week.

"The men we've been getting are very good and cooperative," he states. "We are getting a high caliber of people from other units, and they should be a great asset to the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment."



K Troop column winds its way through the jungle while moving NDPs. that the 11th ACR had turned into a mechanized infantry unit for all the rucksacks

'Right hand man'

By Ralph Leigh

"He's my right-hand man," remarked Platoon Sergeant Washington Capers of 3rd Squadron's K Troop. He was talking about Staff Sergeant James W. O'Brien, Sgt. Capers' section leader and the man he depends upon to help keep the men and the tracks running.

The concerns of a section leader extend to just about everything which happens under him. A great deal of his time is taken up with making sure everything is properly maintained. He must make sure every part of the vehicles, their tracks, weapons, power packs, are up, and that the troopers who man them are ready and alert.

On a RIF, Sgt. O'Brien helps coordinate fire and movement in addition to TCing his own track.

Third in the platoon's chain of command, the section leader must be capable of taking over the platoon in an emergency, and it is with this in mind that section leaders are selected.

RVN Armor School

Blackhorse joins faculty

The class, held outdoors at a tank firing range, resembled AIT back in the states. The instructor, pointing to a blackboard, was explaining armor tactics. The students sat in a semicircle around him.

The difference, however, was that the students were Vietnamese officers, the instructor an American major

from the 11th ACR, and the location was Trang Bom, Republic of Vietnam.

For the first time, the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment is offering a course of instruction to officers of Vietnamese armored units.

Major Jay Cook, 1st Squadron's S-3 and one of the teachers in the program, explained: "It's necessary for the Vietnamese officers to understand our tactics. They all can't go to the United States for this, so we teach them in Vietnam. They might not use all our tactics, but they should at least be exposed to them."

The program offered by the Blackhorse includes a review of basic armor tactics and principles, and classes on the M48 Tank, the Sheridan, and the 155 millimeter mobile Howitzer.

The course concludes with a firepower demonstration, with each vehicle firing its main gun.

The training that the 11th ACR provides is a part of the total instruction which Vietnamese officers receive in the Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces Armor School. The school, with its cadre of 528, offers both advanced individual training and unit training to the

Army of the Republic of Vietnam and to Vietnamese Regional Forces.

Cooperation between the School and the Blackhorse is a fairly recent development. According to Lieutenant Colonel Charles W. Burns, the senior American advisor at the school, "The 11th ACR first became involved with the School July 7 when 3rd Squadron set up its fire support base on the school's tank range."

Since that first, extraordinary meeting, the school has been offering the use of its tank range to the Regiment. Currently, the line troops from 1st Squadron are using the range to conduct a combat crew proficiency course.

Lt. Col. Burns explained that most of the officers enrolled in the course are the executive officers of troop commanders from Vietnam armored squadrons and that the purpose of the course is to train them to be squadron commanders.

One of the students, Captain Doan Chi Sanh, observed, "This is a very intelligent course for us to be given. This is the first time the 11th Cav has taught here. When we go back to our units we will have the benefit of its experience."

Air Cav has new helipad

Thunderhorse Pad, a modern new helipad with the latest design features, is the new base of operations for the helicopters of the Regiment's Air Cav Troop and three squadrons.

The giant earth movers of C Company, 34th Engineer Battalion worked all summer, filling in the lot across from Air Cav Troop for the helipad. The engineers then covered the surface with asphalt and put up protective revetments for the Blackhorse ships. "They did a very professional job," commented Major Jay Blanchard, the Air Cavalry Troop Commander.

The new pad, with its 800-foot flyway, will house nine Cobra gun ships, 14 Light Observation Helicopters, and 16 Hueys.

Adjoining the new helipad to the north, the 398th Helicopter Maintenance Company is installing a maintenance area. When it is completed, the 398th will move its operations from Long Binh to Di An, and thus be able to provide convenient and faster maintenance work for the Regiment's helicopters.

The Thunderhorse Pad has won the praise of USARV aviation officials for its modern design and safety features.

Reup brings \$10,000

"I'm gaining a lot of valuable experience in the Army, and of course, there's that money," says Specialist 5 James R. Radtke.

"That money" Radtke referred to amounts to \$10,000, the maximum variable reenlistment bonus the Army offers. When he re-upped at Fire Support Base Bandit II October 11, Radtke became the first Blackhorse trooper in Vietnam to get the top amount.

A field radio mechanic with 3rd Squadron's L Troop, Specialist Radtke was sworn in for another six years in the Army by Lieutenant Colonel

Bobby F. Griffin.

With 29 months service already behind him Radtke has completed a tour in Germany as well as one with the 11th ACR. He plans to return to an assignment in Germany following his upcoming leave.

While home in Chicago, he intends to invest some of his money in the stock market and give some to his parents.

Lt. Col. Griffin, in commenting on Radtke's bonus, said, "What do you say about a guy drawing ten grand? Obviously he is very important to the Army. These are the kind of people we really need."

11th ACR's psyops team calls VC

Attempts to damage the enemy soldier's morale, to destroy his confidence in his leaders and dash his hopes for the future, are as old as war itself. This effort has probably been more effective in this war than others, as the Chieu Hoi Program of the South Vietnamese government has convinced a large number of Viet Cong soldiers to rally to it.

The Regimental civil affairs office has a psyops team whose purpose is to tear down the confidence of the enemy soldier, to turn VC into "Hoi Chanh Viens," or, literally, people who rally. By common usage these ralliers are usually called "Hoi Chanh" or "Chieu Hoi." The latter term is actually the Vietnamese term for the overall rallier program and means "welcome (open) arms."

On a recent day, shortly before his plane was to take off from Di An, Captain Carlos F. Figueroa learned that a Blackhorse unit had made contact with the enemy. Grabbing some tapes and boxes of leaflets, the assistant Regimental S-5 went to his small plane and told the pilot to fly to the scene of the contact.

Circling over the site a few minutes later, they started dropping leaflets while a taped message sounded through the two giant speakers mounted on the plane.

After covering the area of contact, the plane began its prearranged flight,

crossing over selected places in the Regimental area of operations, dropping more leaflets, playing more tapes. At the end of the four and one-half hour flight, 193,500 leaflets had been dropped and 50 minutes of tapes had been played in areas where the enemy was most likely to be.

This day's flight was not atypical of the Regimental psyops (psychological operations) missions regularly conducted by the civil affairs office.

The leaflets and tapes used on the flights all originate from the civil affairs office and are tailored for use in specific areas under certain conditions.

Of the several types of leaflets used, the most dramatic are those composed by a Hoi Chanh. When an individual rallies to a Blackhorse unit, he is interviewed by Capt. Figueroa and asked if he would like to write a statement.

If he agrees, his statement is carried on a leaflet together with his picture. The leaflet is then dropped over the area where his former unit and friends are likely to be and thus where it will have the most impact. Often the Hoi Chanh will also make a tape to be played over the area.

When an enemy cache is found, a picture is taken and put on a leaflet which tells the enemy that we have taken his food and ammunition.

Capt. Figueroa also writes leaflets pursuing different themes, such as the homesickness of the VC soldiers or the futility of their continued efforts. After he composes the message, it is sent to a committee of Vietnamese who stress different parts for local emphasis.

Every attempt is made to localize the messages to an area and population as much as possible. "We wouldn't use the same leaflet in the 3rd Squadron AO that we used in 1st Squadron's," Capt. Figueroa said.

"There is no doubt that the program has proven to be effective," Capt. Figueroa states. "It definitely demoralizes the enemy when they see a picture of a friend, read his letter, or hear his voice."

According to Capt. Figueroa, most of the Hoi Chanh who turned themselves into the Regiment were carrying rally appeal leaflets when they gave themselves up.

The S-5 office is constantly trying to measure the effectiveness of its psyops efforts. "When we get a hoi chanh or PW, we ask him about the leaflets, which ones impressed him, whether any offended him, how often he saw a ship dropping them, and what his superiors did when they saw the leaflets," Capt. Figueroa said. "All of this information helps us in planning new leaflets and new drops."



Grunt to gunner

"I was a grunt for eight months," says Specialist 4 Vladimir Kowal.

But Kowal is a grunt no more. He is one of the many young men from the 3rd Brigade of the 9th Infantry Division who have recently joined the Blackhorse Regiment.

When the 3rd of the 9th left Vietnam in October, Kowal was transferred to A Troop, 1st Squadron, where he is now a gunner on an ACAV.

Because of their background as foot soldiers, most of the men from the 3rd Brigade thought they would be assigned to other infantry units. "I'm a grunt," says Kowal, "and I didn't expect to come to the Cav."

Far from complaining, Kowal says that being in an armored cavalry unit has some definite advantages for a man whose main means of transportation has been his feet and whose only protection has been a damp poncho liner. Kowal, the ex-grunt, admits that "being here beats the hell out of walking, and you don't have to sleep in the rain."

Here comes Thunderhorse pink team!

The first time you see a Cobra, you think they just took a jet plane, cut most of the wings off, and put helicopter blades on it. It looks fast and deadly, and it is. Over here, they call them red birds. If a Cobra were a car, it would be a big red convertible. Very fast and very arrogant.

They fly in tandem with those suspicious, persistent little LOHs. These Light Observation Helicopters are called white birds.

A red bird and a white bird together make a pink team.

If you are an 11th ACR trooper out in the field and you see a pink team coming, you can breathe a little easier. If you are a VC or an NVA, you should get down very low, not move a muscle, and above all, not shoot. Because the white bird and the red bird will shoot back. With small arms and miniguns and grenades and cannons and rockets. And they'll do you a job.

